

# **Evaluation of the Idaho Commission for Libraries**

## **2008-2012 LSTA Five-Year Plan**

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## Evaluation Summary

Background of the ICfL: The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the federal agency responsible for implementing the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), requires state recipients to conduct an independent evaluation of programs funded with grant funds. The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) is the state agency that manages Idaho's LSTA Program. ICfL engaged Nancy Bolt & Associates (NB&A) to conduct the evaluation.

The ICfL is an independent state agency with the mission of assisting libraries to build the capacity to better serve their clientele. A five-member Board of Commissioners, appointed by the governor, governs ICfL. A major resource assisting ICfL in carrying out its responsibilities for library development is LSTA funding provided by IMLS.

Major questions addressed in the evaluation: This evaluation will address the following:

- To what extent did ICfL activities in the last five years reach outcomes that meet the LSTA purposes?
- To what extent did ICfL activities in the last five years meet the goals of the ICfL LSTA Five-Year Plan and achieve its identified targets?
- Answers to Retrospective, Process, and Prospective questions posed by IMLS in its evaluation guidelines.

In addition to those questions, this evaluation includes a detailed look at the following LSTA-funded statewide projects.

Competitive Grants  
Continuing Education  
e-Branch in a Box  
LiLI-Unlimited

Read to Me  
Talking Books Service  
Tweens and Teens Project

We used four methodologies to gather data to determine the outcomes and impact of ICfL's activities in the last five years and to answer the evaluative questions posed by IMLS.

- Review of documentation related to all projects
- Interviews with ICfL staff and LSTA Advisory Council members
- A survey of the library community
- Three library community focus groups

### Key Findings:

In the original Plan, written in 2008, ICfL identified the following as LSTA purposes:

1. Expanding services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages;
2. Developing library services that provide all users access to information through local, state, regional, national and international electronic networks;
3. Providing electronic and other linkages among and between all types of libraries;
4. Developing public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations;

5. Targeting library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills; and,
6. Targeting library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children (from birth through age 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line.

#### IMLS Retrospective Questions

1. *Activities undertaken under the current Plan addressed all six LSTA purposes.* We analyzed project files to identify which of the six LSTA purposes outlined in the Act were addressed in each project. We concluded that, overall, ICfL activities in the last five years resulted in outcomes that met the LSTA purposes. All LSTA purposes and ICfL's LSTA goals were addressed by some project during the span of the Plan.

**Table 1: ICfL's LSTA goals, Statewide Programs, and LSTA Purposes Addressed**

Note: ICfL uses the term Needs and Goals for their Plan. ICfL modified Need II, Goal A, and Need IV, Goal A in March 2011. For purposes of this report, we use the revised Need and Goals.

ICfL Plan Needs & Goals	Programs to meet Need	LSTA Purposes
Need 1. Idaho libraries must strategically position themselves to actively create and embrace the future. <b>Goal A.</b> Awareness and understanding of the disparate ways information is accessed and processed creates valued services.	Competitive Grants LiLI-U Talking Book Service Continuing Education	1, 2, 3, 5, 6
Need II. Idaho libraries need to develop and sustain services valued by digital natives. <b>Changed to:</b> Idaho libraries need to develop and sustain valued services. <b>Goal A.</b> Libraries embrace and enhance digital natives' approach to information. <b>Changed to:</b> Libraries embrace and enhance evolving approaches to information.	Competitive Grants LiLI-U Talking Book Service Continuing Education	1, 2, 3, 5, 6
<b>Need III.</b> Idaho libraries need to create and promote a vital identity. <b>Goal A.</b> Libraries flourish as a central place in a learning society.	Read to Me Competitive grants Tweens and Teens e-Branch in a Box LiLI-U Continuing Education	1,2,3,5,6
<b>Need III. Goal B.</b> The citizens of Idaho identify their libraries as vital	Competitive Grants	1,5,6
<b>Need IV.</b> Idaho libraries must sustain an infrastructure that provides for services in an atmosphere of innovation and change. <b>Changed to:</b> Idaho libraries must sustain an infrastructure that provides for services	Competitive Grants	All

ICfL Plan Needs & Goals	Programs to meet Need	LSTA Purposes
in an atmosphere of innovation and change and the present economic challenges. <b>Goal A.</b> Libraries thrive in an environment that encourages innovation, risk, and change.		
<b>Need IV. Goal B.</b> Libraries' infrastructures empower service development and delivery.	LiLI-U Competitive Grants Continuing Education e-Branch in a Box	1,2,3,5,6
<b>Need IV. Goal C.</b> Libraries reach out to all segments of Idaho's population.	Talking Book Service Read to Me program Competitive Grants Continuing Education Tweens and Teen	All

**Table Two: LSTA Funds Spent in Last Three Years to Reach ICfL's LSTA Goals**

Notes: 1. The increase in spending for Need 4. Goal C reflects the use of LSTA funds starting in 2009 for Talking Book Service. 2. Sub-grants are those grants awards to libraries through the competitive process. ICfL administers statewide Programs for the benefit of Idaho libraries and residents.

State Goals	2008	2009	2010	Totals
Need 1. Goal A. Awareness & understanding of the disparate ways information is accessed & processed creates valued services.	2 Statewide Programs and 1 sub-grant \$269,731	2 Statewide Programs \$75,019	3 Statewide programs and 3 sub-grants \$183,065	\$527,815
Need 2. Goal A. Libraries embrace and enhance evolving approaches to information.	3 sub-grants \$29,308	No Projects	No Projects	\$29,308
Need 3. Goal A. Libraries flourish as a central place in a learning society.	4 Statewide Programs and 1 sub-grant \$643,123	3 Statewide Programs including CE Grants to individuals \$404,773	2 Statewide Programs and 5 sub-grants and CE grants to individuals \$537,860	\$1,585,756
Need 3. Goal B. The citizens of Idaho identify their libraries as vital.	1 sub-grant \$13,492	No Projects	No Projects	\$13,492
Need 4. Goal A. Libraries thrive in an environment that encourages innovation, risk, and change.	1 Statewide Program \$47,205	1 Statewide Program and 1 sub-grant \$95,296	No Projects	\$142,501
Need 4. Goal B. Libraries' infrastructures empower service	6 sub-grant \$159,157	3 Statewide Programs	2 Statewide Programs	\$656,231

State Goals	2008	2009	2010	Totals
development and delivery.		and 2 sub-grants \$341,490,	\$155,584	
Need 4. Goal C. Libraries reach out to all segments of Idaho's population	1 sub-grant \$18,122	3 Statewide Programs \$428,035	2 Statewide Programs \$438,484	\$884,641

IMLS Retrospective Questions continued.

1. a. *To what extent were these results due to choices made in the selection of strategies?* ICfL requires libraries to address ICfL goals and LSTA purposes to receive LSTA funding for a sub-grant. ICfL also ensures that LSTA-funded projects meet ICfL goals and LSTA purposes.

1. b. *Relationship of results to subsequent implementation:* We found that funded projects' annual results have a strong relationship to ICfL's subsequent implementation of the LSTA program and its programs. ICfL staff members and the appropriate advisory committees and LSTA Advisory Council reviewed the projects' results, including performance measures, and whenever available, project outcomes from statewide projects or from a sub-grantee. Staff members said that they used performance data to decide whether to continue a competitive grant project for more than one year and to make changes in statewide projects.

2. *Benefit of programs and services to targeted groups and individuals:* Sub-grant recipients used a wide variety of approaches to report benefits to targeted audiences; most of these reports presented output measures, including audience attendance and other measures. The review of the sub-grants found that overall the grants met their project objective and outputs. Through the in-depth study of statewide programs, the evaluators found that many of the projects' managers collected OBE information concerning benefits for Idaho's library staff members and for end-users. ICfL used this information in decision-making about policy and implementation strategies. Our recommendations for how to improve the measurements of benefits are included below and in the evaluations of the individual statewide programs. ICfL intends to use these recommendations in drafting the next Five-Year Plan.

#### Other Key Findings:

1. Overall, ICfL activities in the last five years meet the goals in its Plan and achieve its identified targets. For more information on this finding, see the Body of the Evaluation section.

2. ICfL provides useful models of OBE for other state libraries. ICfL provides a robust model in how it collects OBE information about the results from the Read to Me program. Starting in 2008, ICfL commissioned studies on the First Book program and other Read to Me early literacy programs. These studies not only focused on the past year, but also look at results over the past years to provide a comprehensive view of the project's impacts on its participants. The 2010 ICfL evaluation of the Libraries Linking Idaho (LiLI) program included evaluation of training for the LiLI Database program. In addition, ICfL provides easy to use survey forms for librarians to use with project participants, such as childcare providers, parents, and project partners.

Another model for other states to consider is ICfL's use of a standardized form to evaluate continuing education activities. ICfL program managers and libraries can modify the form to some extent, but the basic information collected is uniform, making comparisons and analysis easier. In addition, ICfL conducts a survey of all those who participated in a CE activity over the last six

months. These surveys ask participants in each event sponsored by ICfL two simple questions: did the event help the respondent do a better job and did the information benefit the library's users.

### Key Recommendations:

Idaho librarians are very pleased with ICfL's programs and services. The following recommendations serve to enhance and enrich the program. These general recommendations are based on the document review, interviews with ICfL staff, the survey of Idaho libraries, and three focus groups with Idaho librarians. Recommendations for specific programs can be found in the Body of the Evaluation section.

*Consider eliminating or re-envisioning competitive grant program:* ICfL has made modifications to their grant application processes, including submittal of applications via email to increase grant proposal submission. In spite of their best efforts, applications continue to decline and we believe that the competitive grant program should be eliminated or re-envisioned, including further streamlining of the process.

While the competitive grant program has attracted quality applications that meet LSTA goals and Idaho's Plan, the program has few applicants in spite of efforts to attract more. We recommend that ICfL reallocate competitive grant programs to statewide programs that serve a broader range of libraries and residents. Should the ICfL elect to continue the program, it should consider re-envisioning and redesigning the competitive grant program with a priority of increasing the number of successful applications.

*Grow continuing education:* Idaho librarians find the ICfL continuing education program to be critical in their ongoing success. We recommend that ICfL expand continuing education and training programs to include the ever-changing and emerging technologies. Additionally, ICfL should expand courses for existing programs, adding advanced skills.

*Expand program promotion/awareness:* We recommend that ICfL expand promotion and awareness of all programs in a unified campaign, driven by a marketing plan. ICfL should target this campaign not only to the public but also to Idaho librarians of all types. In our research, academic librarians indicated that they were interested in receiving information regarding the Read to Me program and being notified of research associated with the RTM programs and of the Tweens and Teens program.

*Expand use of outcome measures:* ICfL has used outcome measures in several of their programs, most notably the Libraries Linking Idaho program (LiLI) and the Read to Me program (RTM). These evaluations are comprehensive and provide the Commission and their advisory committees with the data to inform the future of the program and policies. ICfL has not required outcome measurements for the competitive grant program, due to the one-year nature of the projects. ICfL should explore options for incorporating outcome measures in all statewide programs and with their LSTA advisory committee and grantees.

*Expand partnerships for success:* In light of the challenging economic environment, ICfL is encouraged to explore partnerships with library and non-library organizations both within Idaho and beyond. Most notably the Talking Books Service (TBS) could take advantage of changes in the digital environment to collaborate with other Western States to re-invent the TBS program. Additionally, ICfL should disseminate information on their Read to Me program beyond Idaho.



Other states could easily adopt this very successful program, much like the national summer reading program.

Future needs and priorities: As part of the evaluation, Idaho librarians were asked to identify future community needs and priorities for statewide programs to be funded with LSTA funds during the next five years. Survey respondents and focus group participants gave high priority to the Read to Me program, Continuing Education Program, and the Talking Book Service. In addition to existing ICfL programs, the respondents recommended establishment of programs that address youth literacy, provide collections that use emerging technology (e.g., e-books), and address the ongoing training requirements of library workers in the ever-changing technology environment. A summary of the results can be found in Annex I.

## **Body of the Evaluation Study**

### **Background of the Study**

Users and use of the evaluation process: The ICfL intends to use the information in this report to meet the IMLS requirements specified in the *Guidelines for Five-Year Evaluation*, and to inform the development of the new Five-Year LSTA Plan. Users of this report include the Board of Library Commissioners, Idaho's LSTA Advisory Council, the State Librarian, ICfL employees, program advisory groups, and members of Idaho's library community.

Specific evaluation questions or issues addressed: In addition to the questions provided by IMLS, this evaluation contains reviews of the following LSTA-funded programs.

- Competitive Grant program
- Continuing Education and Training
- e-Branch in a Box
- LiLI Unlimited
- Read to Me projects
- Talking Book Service
- Tweens and Teens

Values of the evaluation process: The evaluators adhered to the principles of neutrality, thoroughness, and confidentiality throughout the study. Evaluators remained neutral during every stage of data collection, analysis, interpretation, and writing. Evaluators reminded focus group participants and those interviewed that evaluators are not affiliated with the ICfL, IMLS, or any other interested party. Evaluators conducted interviews and focus groups in confidence and reminded study participants that the evaluation would not contain personally identifiable information, but only aggregated responses. Evaluators attempted to eliminate any personal bias by reviewing each other's conclusions.

### **Description of the Methodology Employed**

The following section is organized according to IMLS' requirements for the evaluation report's format.

Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the research design, tools, and methods used: This project used multiple data-collection methods, including document review, interviews, a survey, and focus groups with Idaho librarians. Evaluators selected these particular methods because they were most likely to answer the research questions and because evaluators have expertise in planning and implementing these methods and analyzing their results. Triangulating data from



multiple sources is a primary strength of this multi-method design. Evaluators did not find any weaknesses of this research design in this particular project. Discussions of the weaknesses of these methods are located in the “Validity and Reliability of the Evidence” section of this report. The following provides detailed information about this evaluation’s tools and methods.

*Document review:* Evaluators identified pertinent documents on the ICfL’s web site and requested those not available online. During the preliminary review of major documents and interviews with staff, evaluators identified more documents to review and ICfL staff quickly provided them. Although the document review stage was intended as the first part of this study, it was an ongoing process, as evaluators identified the need for additional information. Evaluators reviewed these documents to ascertain if program activities resulted in desired outcomes and if each program related to federal Act purposes and to ICfL’s needs and goals. A full list of documents reviewed is in Annex D.

*Interviews:* Pairs of evaluators interviewed the people identified in Annex C. Evaluators determined the questions beforehand and provided these questions to the interviewees to allow them ample time to prepare answers. After each interview was completed, evaluators transcribed their notes.

*Survey:* The ICfL invited members of Idaho’s library community to complete the LSTA Evaluation Survey between January 6 and January 22, 2012. ICfL staff vetted the survey questions and evaluators used their feedback to finalize the questions and the sequence of the survey, and finally to pre-test the survey with five testers. Completion rate for the survey was 84%; 163 people started and 137 completed the survey. A copy of the survey instrument and its results are in Annex E (separate file).

*Focus groups:* Evaluators conducted three focus groups with members from the library community with 23 participants overall. In these focus groups, evaluators asked participants to evaluate current LSTA-funded statewide programs and to identify future trends and needs of Idaho residents and libraries. Focus group questions, locations, and the number of participants at each group, are included in Annex F.

Process followed: Evaluators engaged in data collection and interviews at the beginning of the project. After this step, evaluators created and implemented the survey. Following the survey, evaluators conducted the focus groups. After collecting all the data, evaluators analyzed the documents, transcripts from interviews and focus groups, and the survey results, using IMLS requirements as a guide.

Data sources: Evaluators consulted multiple data sources for this evaluation. ICfL staff provided the documents to review, including LSTA reports, IMLS annual reports, LSTA Advisory Council meeting minutes and the meeting minutes of the ICfL program advisory committees. The interviews relied on ICfL staff members and Idaho’s library community to provide information through the survey and focus groups.

Participation of project/program stakeholders in the evaluation process: Stakeholders and those involved with creating the new Five-Year Plan participated in the survey and focus groups. ICfL staff members made themselves available for interviews, provided documents, advertised the survey’s availability, and invited focus group participants.

Participation of intended users of the evaluation in the evaluation process: As stated above, the ICfL, the primary intended user of this evaluation, participated in many aspects of this process. In addition to those activities already mentioned, ICfL staff provided feedback on the preliminary evaluation report.

Validity and reliability of the evidence: Evaluators assumed that the documents reviewed were pertinent to the evaluation questions. To ensure that evaluators reviewed all pertinent documents, evaluators not only asked the ICfL to provide documents, the evaluators searched to identify more documents. Evaluators believed that these documents are accurate as IMLS and state governing and advisory bodies reviewed and accepted the annual reports and other documents. Furthermore, evaluators assumed that those interviewed did not provide false information and that this information is both valid and reliable.

*Survey validity and reliability:* The survey results are reliable. All respondents answered the same questions and each response received the same analysis. Evaluators assume that other researchers could conduct the same survey in Idaho and would receive the same general results and the same statistical significance findings. Surveys have inherent limitations of validity. Respondents must fit their responses into pre-determined categories, such as “agree or disagree” or “often or never,” and may have different understandings of these choices. To combat this deficiency, representatives from the survey audience pre-tested the survey to provide feedback on any confusing survey elements. Evaluators used this pre-testing to modify the original survey language. To provide greater depth of information and to triangulate the findings, evaluators also conducted focus groups.

*Focus group validity and reliability:* Focus group results are inherently weak on reliability, because small sample sizes and interaction among participants diminishes the ability to replicate results. However, evaluators consider focus group results to be valid. Evaluators are reasonably certain that focus group participants understood the questions and provided responses that were “true” to their own experiences, values, and beliefs. Because focus group participants, in a face-to-face setting, may be reluctant to provide negative comments, the survey provided anonymity. Therefore, using both survey and focus group methods provides greater overall validity. ICfL staff members did not attend focus groups, to avoid influencing discussions.

Ethical considerations: Evaluators maintained confidentiality of the identities of the survey respondents. The ICfL knows the names of focus group and interview participants, but evaluators did not match participants’ comments with individual names in transcripts or in this report. Evaluators do not present any piece of evidence outside of its context in order to promote evaluation conclusions or recommendations. Working together, evaluators questioned each other for any bias or subjectivity in this evaluation.

### **Analysis of Statewide Programs**

As part of the Plan evaluation, the evaluators conducted an in-depth analysis of six statewide programs and the competitive grant process. Evaluators used only three years of data because of the timing of this evaluation. Below is an analysis of these programs.

All survey rating questions used a 1 to 5 rating scale in which 1 was the least preferred; 3 was neutral; and 5 was the most preferred. As with most presentations of a 5-point scale, the average score was 4. The interpretation of these scores is 4.5 and higher is very good; 3.5 to 4.49 is medium; and 3.49 is poor or weak.

## Competitive Grant Program

**Background:** ICfL utilizes LSTA funds to support individual library grants, available to all types of libraries. Libraries must use competitive grant funds for projects that support at least one of the ICfL Board's strategic issues for Idaho's libraries, and that are consistent with LSTA's purpose. ICfL accepts Just-In-Time Grant requests throughout the year as funds are available.

In addition to the programmatic competitive grants, ICfL offers Continuing Education grants, which are available on a first-come, first-served basis as long as funds are available. The ICfL annual report states, "This project provides public, school, and academic library staff, financial assistance to engage in professional development opportunities that meet the purposes of LSTA, in order to improve and expand quality library service to the citizens of Idaho." These include grants for first time attendance at library conferences; funding for travel expenses and conference registration; support for graduate library science courses; and support for ALA Library Support Staff Certification.

**Relation to LSTA purposes and ICfL Needs/Goals:** LSTA Purposes: The Competitive Grant Program supports all LSTA Purposes. ICfL Needs/Goals: The Competitive Grant program supports the following ICfL goals: Need 1, Goal A; Need 2, Goal A; Need 3, Goal A; and Need 4, Goals A and B, and Goal C. (See Table 1: ICfL's LSTA goals, Statewide Programs, and LSTA Purposes Addressed.)

**Budget allocation:** The Competitive Grant Program is funded through an LSTA-funded grant to the Commission. Only three years of data are available.

Program	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	Total
Competitive grants	\$256,637	\$131,071	\$172,600	\$560,308
CE competitive grants	\$60,405	\$34,637	\$19,401	\$114,443

### Program's targets:

Targets	2008	2009	2010	Evaluation
Average 1 sub-grant per year to help support programs & services to meet the needs of different populations.	2 sub-grants	0 sub-grants	3 sub-grants	Met target over 3 years
By 2012, 6 more libraries will have web-accessible catalogs.	2 sub-grants	3 sub-grants	1 sub-grants	Met target
By 2012, decrease the percentage of Idaho's unserved population. (2005 = 12.6 percent)	No districting grants awarded Total pop. 1,523,816; Served 1,332,012 = 191,804 or 12.59% unserved	1 Districting grant awarded, however unsuccessful election; Total pop 1,545,801; Served 1,351,458=	None awarded  Total pop. 1,567,582; Served 1,368,152 = 199,430 or	ICfL reported that there is no measurable change in unserved

<b>Targets</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
		194,343 or 12.58% unserved	12.73% unserved	
Conduct 12 library community group meetings per year.	Conducted 1 LSTA Advisory Committee meeting to review sub-grant proposals and grant policies	Conducted 1 LSTA Advisory Committee meeting to review sub-grant proposals and grant policies	Conducted 1 LSTA Advisory Committee meeting to review sub-grant proposals and grant policies	Contributed to ICfL target
Fund 90% of projects submitted to our grant program.	All 12 grant applications funded	All 3 grant applications funded	All 3 grant applications funded	Met target
Average 1 sub-grant per year to help libraries to deliver innovative programs or services.	7 grants	3 grants	3 grants	Exceeded target
75% of the respondents will indicate they have made changes in their library procedures or services as a result of participating in the individual CE grant opportunity when measured 6 weeks to 6 months after the event	<p>Librarians reported they implemented programs because of the first time conference attendance.</p> <p>75 grants awarded, including 9 LIS</p>	<p>Librarians reported implementing 49 new library programs within 6 months of attendance</p> <p>Awarded 42 grants, 65% for first time conference attendance; 36% (15) continuing their LIS education</p>	<p>10-15 programs created, reaching 75% goal.</p> <p>Awarded 24 grants, 9 for LIS</p>	Target met in 09 and 10. No data available to determine if goal met in FY08.

Competitive Grants achieved results identified in the LSTA and the Plan: These grant programs, including Continuing Education grants, benefited the targeted groups. Participants identified a number of positive impacts from these projects as detailed below.

Impact on Idaho libraries and Users: The Competitive Grant Program met the program target outputs. While ICfL does not require grantees to measure outcomes, due in large part to the one-year nature of the program, grantees reported anecdotal outcomes and, in a few cases, undertook assessment of impact.

Of the survey respondents, 54 (34%) reported that they had applied for a competitive grant. Of these, 46 were public libraries, 4 academic and 3 school libraries. Of those who did not apply, 23 (23.8%) indicated, "My library couldn't provide the required match"; 22 (23.7%) indicated they could not provide the ongoing funding; 22 (22.7%) indicated that they did not have time to write the proposal; while 19 (19.6%) indicated that they did not know their library was eligible. Only 3 (3%) reported they did not have a need for the grant. While all of the options for grant development support are available, when asked, "What resources would you find useful as you prepare and submit a LSTA grant application?", the respondents indicated a need for the following: 78.3% (36) responded "Assistance from a field consultant", 63% (29) indicated grant manual on the ICfL websites, 56.5% (26) indicated face to face workshops, and 52.2% (24) indicated "Assistance from other ICfL staff members."

Thirty-two percent (45 of 140) of survey respondents indicated that they had applied for and received CE grants. The overall rating of the program was positive at 4.57 out of 5. Excellent ratings of the program were given by 64.4% (29) of awardees. "Very important to Idaho library staff- makes conferences and degree study more accessible," shared a survey respondent. In response to the question regarding how the CE grant helped them, respondents replied that the grants increased their ability to serve users; this response received a 4.53 out of 5 rating. One survey respondent commented, "CE grants have allowed me the opportunity to enhance my skills and in turn provide higher quality programs for my patrons. I would not have had the chance to attend these conferences without the support of CE grants from ICfL." Nearly all respondents felt that the ICfL should continue to support the CE grant program (4.64 of 5).

Receiving a CE grant from the ICfL helped me to:		
Answer Options	Rating Average	Response Count
Increase my ability to serve library users.	4.53	45
Improve the library's delivery of services for learning.	4.32	44
Improve the library users' access to information and education resources.	4.31	45
Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations.	3.70	44
Target library services to diverse individuals.	3.87	45
Target library service to persons having difficulty using a library.	3.73	45
Improve library services to underserved communities.	4.04	45
Improve library services to children from families with income below the poverty line.	3.89	45
Develop more effective programs and services for library users.	4.36	45
The ICfL should continue to support CE grants.	4.64	45

The CE grants supported a range of educational activities including attendance at Idaho Library Association Conference. Two individuals reported participation in the ALA Library Support Staff Certification program, and others received support to attend ALA and the Rural Librarians conference. All reported that they gathered ideas that they implemented after returning to Idaho; they expanded their appreciation for the library profession; and completed their library education with support each semester.

A survey respondent suggested, “Perhaps provide more clearly defined guidelines for public or school vs. academic library grant applicants. The grant application seems more applicable to public libraries and I found it difficult to apply the grant requirements to an academic library setting.” Focus group participants echo this suggestion.

Focus group participants reported exceptional support from ICfL, both in writing the grant and during implementation. While the survey participants remarked that additional training and support would encourage them to apply, the focus group participants said that the training increased their confidence. “I thought the process was daunting before the training, but after the training it was ok.” As in other states, the librarians said that the competitive grants allowed them to innovate and undertake projects that they could not fund from operating budgets.

- “We were able to start a program with LSTA funds and sustain it with local money.”
- “We had a teen-parent program and couldn’t have done it without LSTA grant. Free books make friends. We went to the teen-parent groups at the schools. We are now funding the program ourselves.”
- “Shows that libraries can be models for other libraries.”

Eight focus group participants rated the Competitive Grant Program a high priority, 11 a medium priority and 4 a low priority.

Suggested improvements:

1. *Consider eliminating or re-envisioning the Competitive Grant Program:* In light of the few applications over the past several years, we recommend that ICfL allocate these funds to expand other programs or add new statewide programs, such as e-Books. Alternatively, ICfL could re-envision and redesign the Competitive Grant Program.
2. *Continue Continuing Education grant program:* There is significant use of the CE grants across all types of libraries. Regardless of the disposition of the Competitive Grant Program, the CE grants should continue. The ICfL is commended for assessing CE activities six months after CE programs.
3. *Continue to streamline the application process:* ICfL has undertaken efforts to streamline the application process. In spite of that, survey respondents and focus group participants requested additional streamlining. The process allows for email submittal of proposals, however moving to an online application will improve productivity. We also recommend that ICfL review the LSTA Grant Application Kit. This 122-page document was reported to be a barrier particularly to smaller libraries. Moving to a web-based document, rather than a PDF, which would allow applicants to find specific sections easily, might improve the use of the grant writing information.
4. *Clarify who is eligible for LSTA grants:* While there is information in the *Grant Writing Kit* regarding eligibility, there was still an eligibility question among survey respondents and focus group participants. We recommend implementing a communication program that will clarify for Idaho libraries who is eligible to apply for a grant. Clarifying eligibility is critical to success of the program, particularly among the school library community.
5. *Provide guidance on potential sub-grant projects to increase applications:* ICfL provides a list and summary of successful projects, but does not provide sample successful applications, as it would discourage locally undertaken needs assessment and planning. ICfL field consultants and program managers play a valuable role in grant development; however, to respond to the suggestions from focus group participants and survey respondents, the field consultants may need to modify their approach if ICfL wishes to expand participation. To realize the goal of increasing applications, ICfL will need to explore with potential applicants examples of successful grant applications, and expand



awareness of potential topics. This effort is particularly important for smaller libraries with limited staff to develop grants.

ICfL staff and LSTA Advisory Committee members asked, “What could be done to increase the number of applications?” The survey supported focus group recommendations, including providing increased awareness of ICfL-funded projects.

### **Continuing Education**

Background: Continuing Education is an important part of ICfL’s mission to “build library capability.” A Continuing Education Advisory Group provides guidance for the statewide Action Plan that guides for all CE activities,

ICfL provides training for library staff in all of its programs, including the LSTA-funded Read to Me, Tween and Teens (T&T), Libraries Linking Idaho (LiLI) networking activities, e-Branch in a Box, and Talking Book Service. In addition, ICfL offers Alternative Basic Library Education (ABLE), a training program for staff members who have no formal library education or library experience. ABLE’s sister program, SABLE (Supplemental Alternative Basic Library Education), provides additional training to that audience. ICfL uses LSTA funds to provide access to WebJunction, which offers Idaho’s library workers access to online workshops, courses, and conferences. In addition, ICfL offered LSTA-funded grants for CE purposes. The evaluators’ assessment of that program is in this report’s Competitive Grant section.

Relation to LSTA purposes and ICfL Needs/Goals: LSTA Purpose: ICfL’s Continuing Education Program helps Idaho library workers address each LSTA purpose. ICfL Needs/Goals: This Program meets Need 1, Goal A; Need 2, Goal A; Need 3, Goal A; and Need 4, Goals B and C. (See Table 1: ICfL’s LSTA goals, Statewide Programs, and LSTA Purposes Addressed.)

Budget allocation: CE is supported through an LSTA-funded grant to the Commission. Only three years of data are available. Many of ICfL’s statewide programs also offer LSTA-funded CE events; the costs of those programs are not included in the chart below.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Total</b>
Amount	\$77,516	\$29,450	\$51,453	\$158,419

Program’s targets: The Plan contains multiple outcome and output targets specifically for CE under many of its Needs and Goals. Output targets include the number of CE events, the methods of delivery, and attendees. The following chart shows that ICfL has increased the number of events, the number of online events, and the number of participants from 2008 to 2010.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
<b># Events</b>	528	655	685	30%
F2F (Face to Face)	64	87	51	-20%
Online	464	568	634	37%
<b># Events by Program or Provider</b>				
WebJunction	309	336	412	33%
ABLE/SABLE	16	16	16	0%



Year	2008	2009	2010	Percent Change
College of DuPage	5	5	4	-20%
<b># Participants</b>	1871	1782	2449	31%
F2F (Face to Face)	965	1300	809	-16%
Online	906	482	1640	81%
<b># Events by Program or Provider</b>				
WebJunction	143	143	521	264%
ABLE/SABLE	310	205	634	105%
College of DuPage	79	~ 80	167	111%

ICfL set two outcome measures for CE activities.

**Outcome 1:** 80 percent of attendees evaluated their skills and knowledge at a 4 or 5 level (on a scale of 1-5) after the CE event.

**Outcome 2:** 75 percent of attendees surveyed will indicate they have made changes in their library procedures or services as a result of participating in teleconferences, workshops, CE mini-grant activities, or other types of CE activities when measured six weeks to six months after the event.

To measure Outcome 1, ICfL required all instructors to conduct a pre- and post-test of CE participants. To measure Outcome 2, every six months, ICfL sent a survey to participants about their CE activities. In addition, ICfL conducted annual surveys of WebJunction users asking about frequency of their use, satisfaction level, and the reasons why participants used WebJunction.

Not only does ICfL collect these outcome data, but all Program Managers review the CE reports to evaluate past offerings and to make needed changes in upcoming training activities.

Continuing education activities achieved results identified in the LSTA and the Plan: Study participants identified a number of positive impacts from these activities as detailed below.

The survey contained questions about WebJunction. Eighty-four (60%) of the 140 who answered the question, "Have you participated in WebJunction Training opportunities?" answered yes. The same number of respondents gave an average rating of 4.13 to WebJunction.

Answer Options	Rating Average	Response Count
The ICfL should continue to support WebJunction.	4.33	82
Increase my ability to serve library users.	4.11	81
Develop more effective programs and services for library users.	3.90	81
Improve the library users' access to information and education resources.	3.89	81
Target library services to diverse individuals.	3.58	81
Target library service to persons having difficulty using a library.	3.58	81
Improve library services to underserved communities.	3.54	82
Improve library services to children from families with income below	3.53	80

the poverty line. Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations.	3.31	80
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The 139 respondents who identified their library's needs for the next five years selected "Providing trainings for current staff" as fifth overall in the list of 19 potential needs. General continuing education was not a response in the questions about LSTA purposes, however respondents were asked to prioritize WebJunction membership and the CE grants. WebJunction received a rating average of 3.58 and the CE grants a 3.84 average rating.

Focus group participants confirmed the survey's positive findings about CE, in particular about WebJunction. One librarian said that she requires all employees to complete WebJunction courses as part of their performance goals. Another librarian reported that the library's foundation board members complete WebJunction courses. Another reflected the general attitude toward WebJunction, saying that, "WebJunction—I use it all the time, when I have a new program or project I look to Web Junction to learn about it."

More evidence that libraries have integrated ICfL's CE activities into their operations is reflected in a focus group participant's report that her library uses ABLE and SABLE to train new staff members without library experience. Another participant said that the Board requires ABLE and SABLE participation as part of employees' annual reviews. Finally, this comment summarizes the prevalent view of the ICfL's CE activities: "Everything we learn we learn through the Commission."

Eleven focus group participants rated Continuing Education activities as a high priority, while 10 rated it a medium priority, and 2 rated it a low priority.

#### Suggested improvements:

1) *Holistic approach to CE:* Study participants provided few suggestions for improvements; and indeed, evaluators found little that ICfL could do to improve its significant and effective CE program. One minor suggestion is to combine CE activities that are not associated with a particular program under one LSTA project. This action would give a more holistic view of CE activities to evaluators and IMLS.

2) *Disseminate success of CE activities:* The Plan contains output and outcome targets for CE under almost each of the Plan's goals. However, the LSTA reports do not include outcomes of the six-month CE assessment in a summary fashion. We suggest that ICfL provide a summary report of its progress at advisory committee meetings and Idaho professional conferences to assist in expanding awareness and aiding in decision-making.

#### **e-Branch in a Box**

**Background:** ICfL utilized LSTA funds to support websites hosted on LiLI.org, enabling Idaho libraries to establish a web presence with a minimum of specialized technical knowledge and software. The project includes supporting participants, promoting usage, and maintaining and improving the e-Branch system. Although ICfL began this program in FY 2007, e-Branch was not included in the last LSTA evaluation.

**Relation to LSTA purposes and ICfL Needs/Goals:** LSTA Purposes: e-Branch in a Box meets LSTA purposes 1,2,3,5, and 6. ICfL Needs/Goals: Need 3, Goal A and Need 4, Goal B. (See Table 1: ICfL's LSTA goals, Statewide Programs, and LSTA Purposes Addressed.)

**Budget allocation:** e-Branch in a Box is funded through an LSTA-funded grant to the Commission. Only three years of data are available. Hardware to support this activity was purchased in FY2007. ICfL maintains the program through non-LSTA funds.

**Program's targets:** The data shows that usage of e-Branch in a Box program over the three years has increased.

Target	2008	2009	2010	Evaluation
By 2012, 90 percent of the public libraries will have web sites that meet ICfL's eligibility requirements.	15% or 16 sites	33% or 35 sites	No data available	ICfL is on track to meet its target.

**e-Branch in a Box achieved results identified in the LSTA and the Plan:** e-Branch benefited its targeted groups. Participants identified a number of positive impacts from its projects as detailed below.

**Impact on Idaho libraries and Users:** Of the 130 respondents who answered the question regarding use of e-Branch in a Box, 33 (25.4%) responded affirmatively. Reasons for not using the service include: 34 (45.9%) stated, "We are satisfied with our library's website", while 11 (14.9%) indicated that they did not know enough about e-Branch, and 16 (21%) had other reasons. The most common reason was that the library needed to use their parent organization's website. When asked what difference the e-Branch program made, the survey respondents indicated that it saved the library money (4.48 out of 5), and "my library users are better served because of e-Branch" (4.48). There was strong support for continuing the e-Branch program.

Few focus group participants used e-Branch in a Box; however, those participants who did rated it highly, saying that they would not have a web presence without it. e-Branch was a high priority (2 participants) for those who utilized the program, a medium priority for 4 participants, and a low priority for 11 participants.

**Suggested improvements:**

- Expand training:* Like other technology-based services, website capabilities and enhancements change regularly and Idaho librarians need ongoing training to both maintain their site and take advantage of new functionality.
- Expand data collection:* As in other ICfL programs, collecting outcome-based data is important, albeit challenging. Much of the current data about the benefits of the e-Branch program is anecdotal. ICfL could work with participating libraries to conduct user surveys or focus groups regarding the impact of the e-Branch websites.

**Libraries Linking Idaho (LiLI) - Networking**

**Background:** Libraries Linking Idaho (LiLI) is a key component of ICfL's Networking program. LiLI is a group of projects and services that bring networked library service to Idaho residents. LiLI includes LiLI-Databases (LiLI-D), electronic resources funded by the state. LSTA resources fund the following: LiLI Unlimited (LiLI-U), a group of subscription resource-sharing tools through OCLC; the LiLI steering committee which works in partnership with ICfL staff to plan, initiate, and evaluate LiLI services; and LiLI.org, a central portal to LiLI services accessed directly by Idahoans, providing a consistent point of access for users regardless of their locality. In addition to LiLI-Unlimited, many Idaho libraries participate in LiLI Express, a voluntary statewide reciprocal borrowing

agreement. The focus of this review is the LiLI resource-sharing activities including LiLI Unlimited, which includes LiLI-U, LiLI Express, and networking consulting.

Relation to LSTA purposes and ICfL Needs/Goals: LSTA Purposes: LiLI Networking meets LSTA purposes 1,2,3,5, and 6. ICfL Needs/Goals: LiLI Networking, including LiLI-U, meets Need 1, Goal A; Need 2, Goal A; Need 3, Goal A; and Need 4, Goal B. (See Table 1: ICfL's LSTA goals, Statewide Programs, and LSTA Purposes Addressed.)

Budget allocation: LiLI Networking, including LiLI-U, is supported through an LSTA-funded grant to the Commission. Only three years of data are available.

<b>LiLI program</b>	<b>FY2008</b>	<b>FY2009</b>	<b>FY2010</b>	<b>Total</b>
LiLI-Unlimited	\$ 189,222	\$194,906	\$ 89,000	\$384,128
Total Networking Program	\$246,387	\$208,230	\$148,351	\$602,968

Program targets: ICfL's Plan does not include outcome targets for this program, but ICfL reports on output targets and program's benefits annually. More than 200 libraries participate in the Idaho Group on OCLC, providing Idaho residents access to collections across the world. ICfL reported anecdotal information from participating libraries in the *2010 Networking Report*, such as, "LiLI Unlimited has made it possible to truly level the playing field in regard to resource sharing among Idaho libraries," and, "Our teachers are really sold on LiLI. We couldn't survive without LiLI."

ICfL's annual IMLS reports showed that participation in resource-sharing programs and ILL activities have declined between 2008 and 2010. The Networking report noted, "When asked about reasons for withdrawing from the program, library directors have consistently identified a need to reduce expense in response to decreased library budgets."

<b>Targets</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Increase the number of libraries participating in LiLI Unlimited by 5 percent annually	Participating libraries decreased 1.35%	Participating libraries decreased 1.82%	Participating libraries decreased 3.7%	Target not met
Increase the number of interlibrary loans through LiLI Unlimited by 2 percent annually	No significant change from prior year	ILL requests increased 12.4%	ILL requests decreased 8.6%	Did not meet target in 2010
By 2012, 6 more libraries will have web-accessible catalogs.	58.65% of libraries have web-accessible catalogs	59.62% of libraries have web-accessible catalogs	62% of libraries have web-accessible catalogs	Met target
Conduct 12 library community group meetings per year.	Conducted 4 LiLI Steering Committee meetings	Conducted 4 LiLI Steering Committee meetings	Conducted 4 LiLI Steering Committee meetings	Contributes toward the target
Increase the number of interlibrary loans by public and	Public—increased 14.9%	Public—increased 10.71% Academic—not	Public—decreased 2.5% Academic	Partially met target

Targets	2008	2009	2010	Evaluation
academic libraries by 2% over the previous year as reported in annual statistics.		reported	(reported biannually)—increased 24% over 2008	
Maintain the number of libraries participating in the statewide reciprocal borrowing program. (2007 baseline = 58 libraries)	69 libraries participate in LiLI Express	69 libraries participate in LiLI Express	63 of 103 libraries participate in LiLI Express	Total # of libraries has increased over 2007; participation has declined since 2008.

The LiLI Steering Committee is composed of 14 librarians representing existing networks or consortia, library systems, and individual libraries. All types and sizes of libraries and geographic regions are represented. In a 2010 survey, 100% of its members said they felt they have positively contributed to the development of statewide programs and services. Comments included:

- “LiLI Steering Committee has helped my understanding of the larger picture, encompassing academic, public, school, and special libraries.”
- “I feel I may be able to contribute, in a small way, by bringing an understanding of small rural libraries to LSC.”

During 2010, ICfL used LSTA funds for an evaluation of the LiLI Database program. In addition to assessing the effectiveness of the program and suggested improvements, *A Study of Libraries Linking Idaho Databases* revealed the fiscal impact of LiLI-D on Idaho libraries.

- “A common thread about impact was that LiLI-D saved the libraries money. Focus group members reported that they could cancel their library’s subscriptions to databases and reference books. They mentioned they saved space by discarding past issues of periodical and reference books.”
- “A major theme in the focus groups was that the existence of a state-funded LiLI-D allowed the local library to reallocate resources and better serve their users.”
- “The study respondents found that LiLI-D improved their image in the community.”

LiLI achieved results identified in the LSTA Act and the Plan: Overall LiLI Networking met its goals; however, the economy has caused libraries to reduce their level of participation and resource sharing.

Impact on Idaho libraries and users: Idaho libraries ranked LiLI-U and associated resource-sharing activities second in priority for LSTA funds, 4.20 out of 5. Of the 132 survey respondents, 79 (59.8%) indicated that they used LiLI-U, while 20 (15.2%) indicated that their institution uses LiLI-U, but they are not directly involved. Seventeen respondents (12.9%) did not know if their library participated while 16 indicated that they did not use LiLI-U. Of the 16 respondents who indicated that they did not participate, 9 (56.3%) reported, “The Library cannot afford to participate”; and 6 (37.5%) noted, “We have another cataloging source.” Of those who used LiLI, 39 (47.6%) gave it an overall rating of excellent, while 36 (43.9%) rated it good. One survey respondent commented, “Through this service we are connected with a world-wide library service. That to me seems profound.”

Answer Options	Rating Average	Response Count	All focus group participants
My library received more use, such as increased website traffic or in-person visits, because we offer interlibrary loan services through LiLI-U.	3.44	81	
Interlibrary loan through OCLC is an essential part of my library's services.	4.04	81	
My library's users depend on LiLI-U's interlibrary loan services for the information resources that they need.	3.65	81	
My library received more use, such as increased website traffic or in-person visits, because our holdings are on LiLI-U.	3.33	80	
My library increased access to information and education resources for our users.	4.18	80	

found value in the LiLI-U; participants touted increased access to the state's library resources, and the support of the information resource needs of all sizes and types of libraries, with particular importance to small rural libraries. Of particular note was the availability of OCLC cataloging and resource-sharing services. Focus group comments included:

- "[LiLI-U] opens up a huge world"
- "It's a timesaver, rush items are available in 24 hours."
- "LiLI-U is more valuable than ever before. It will be a source of cataloging information."
- "It is our portal to the world"
- "Rural libraries connect patrons with the rest of the world"

Ten focus group participants rated LiLI-U as a high priority and 12 rated it a medium priority.

Suggested improvements:

1. *Continue and expand training:* Focus group and survey respondents indicated they wanted more frequent training. Librarians who use the systems infrequently struggle to remain current with their functionality. A survey respondent asked for more education on original cataloging. This survey comment exemplifies the need for training: "I sometimes have a struggle working with OCLC. Probably due to limited time getting to experiment and use the program. (I) have thought of dropping this resource because of the cost vs. the application of it in our library."

2. *Continue to expand the participating libraries:* ICfL should explore options for expanding participation. Recruiting non-participating libraries may require creative solutions, expanded promotion, and awareness building. As one focus group participant said, "Make certain all libraries are participating. Cost is an issue and concern for the non-participating libraries."

## Read to Me

**Background:** The Read to Me (RTM) Program is an umbrella for various projects with the aim of providing information, training, technical assistance, and resources for libraries, families, childcare providers, children, and community partners. This program's vision is, "For all parents and caregivers to nurture their children's early literacy skills and for all children to develop as independent readers and become lifelong learners." RTM's projects include the following:

1. Every Child Ready to Read provides workshops to children and their parents to learn early literacy skills.
2. Read to Me First Book provides books and library resources for at-risk children.



3. Idaho Child Care Reads provides early literacy workshops for childcare providers.
4. Jump Start Kindergarten provides early literacy information and a free book to each child during kindergarten registration.
5. Bright Futures, Summer Reading supports reading skills for the school year.

Relation to LSTA purposes and ICfL Needs/Goals: LSTA Purpose: The RTM program supports all LSTA Purposes. ICfL Needs/Goals: The RTM program meets Need 3, Goal A and Need 4, Goal C. (See Table 1: ICfL's LSTA goals, Statewide Programs, and LSTA Purposes Addressed.)

Budget allocation: ICfL spent the following LSTA funds on the RTM Program. Only three years of data are available.

Year	2008	2009	2010	Total
Amount	\$13,106	\$396,227	\$396,764	\$806,097

Program's targets:

Targets	2008	2009	2010	Evaluation
Increase registrations at summer reading programs by 10 percent annually.	63,300 (38%)	69,472 (9.75%)	71,433 (3.5%)	Not met
Increase libraries participating in RTM outreach programs by 10 percent annually.*	71	68	63	Not met
Maintain number of children served through RTM programs and services (specifically ages 0-8)	17,427	15,784	12,211	Not met
Publish an e-mail newsletter 20 times per year, for improving services to children and young adults.**	20 per year	12 per year**	20 per year	Met
Identified students in K-3 grades will demonstrate grade-level reading skills as set forth in state performance goals.				Did Not evaluate due to privacy rights
In the 2009 survey, 75% of respondents will indicate the RTM program and services helped their libraries to build their service capacity in at least 2 of the identified areas.	33%			Results did not meet this target.

\*According to RTM annual reports, many libraries reported that local budget cuts prevented them from participating in outreach opportunities.

\*\*The reduction in newsletters was due to staff change.

RTM achieved results identified in the LSTA Act and the Plan: Read to Me benefited its targeted groups. Study participants identified a number of positive impacts from its projects as detailed below.

Impact on Idaho libraries and users: Although the RTM program did not meet some of its targets during the last three years, overall, the suite of RTM projects is very popular among library participants and has demonstrated impacts on its intended audiences. Librarians believe that the projects have positive results for program participants, as shown by the very high rating scores for four RMT projects. Respondents identified "making sure that children develop literacy skills" as fourth in a list of purposes for libraries in the next five years. When prioritizing all LSTA-funded



statewide programs, survey respondents gave RTM projects the highest priority and Bright Futures the third priority.

Answer Options	Rating Average	Rating Average	Rating Average	Rating Average	Rating Average
	First Book (N=34)	ECRTR (N=23)	Child Care Reads (N=11)	Jump Start (N=34)	Bright Futures (N=66)
The parents or caretakers who participated in this project are more aware of the value of reading to children.	4.50	4.61	4.64	4.00	
The parents or caretakers who participated in the ECRTR improved their skills with helping children to strengthen early literacy skills.		4.52			
The parents or caretakers who participated in this project become regular library users.	4.00	4.09	3.55	4.23	
The library received media coverage about this project.	3.50	3.57	3.82	3.30	
This project is an essential part of my library's services.	4.24	3.95	3.91	3.93	4.43
ICfL should continue to offer this project.	4.76	4.57	4.73	4.35	4.70
Participation in a Bright Futures Summer Outreach program increased my library's summer reading participation rates.					4.34
Participation in a Bright Futures Summer Outreach program strengthened my library's partnerships with our local schools.					4.50

The lowest scores on the chart illustrate the view that Child Care facilities do not become regular library users after participating in Child Care Reads. In addition, respondents do not agree with the statement that these projects resulted in media attention. Again, perhaps a unified, statewide promotion campaign can help participants understand the value of media attention and help them develop the skills to implement a promotional program. One of the challenges of a statewide promotional campaign is that some of Idaho's most rural communities and libraries are not served by local media.

It is noteworthy that a number of comments commend the RTM projects. At the same time, survey participants suggested improvements in these projects. These comments are included in the survey report in Annex E.

Not having the time or adequate staff are the most cited reasons for not participating in these projects. A few respondents cited difficulties working with schools in the Jump-Start Project and a number of respondents reported that their very small communities had no child care facilities.

Confirming the positive results about the RTM program from the survey, focus groups participants, including academic and school librarians, were uniformly supportive of this program and gave it the highest priority. Focus group participants shared a number of anecdotes and comments about the projects' results; the following are sample statements.

- "Area daycare centers wouldn't be providing literacy without RTM."
- "RTM is good for community development—working with schools, WIC and other organizations."
- "We have to go to the voters every two years for a levy—it has passed by a higher percentage each time, we attribute that to the RTM."
- "Adds a lot to the image of the library; makes the library indispensable to the community and this program really helps that."
- Teach kids value of reading; teach parent value of early childhood literacy.

Twenty-two participants rated the RTM program as a high priority, while one participant rated it a medium priority.

Evaluators also reviewed the extensive research on RTM programs conducted by Dr. Roger Stewart during the last three years. Dr. Stewart collected data from library project reports, parent evaluations of project activities, and site visits. All of the reports are of interest to those seeking to understand the impact of these projects and the importance of LSTA funding to support these efforts. Of particular interest, is Dr. Stewart's 2011 report, a longitudinal study of the Every Child Reach to Read project, in which he found that, "Substantial percentages of respondents report changing their behavior as a consequence of attending the workshops and these percentages appear to be relatively stable over time."

Like traditional summer reading programs, ICfL offers Bright Futures to help maintain or improve children's reading skills during the summer. However, unlike traditional programs, Bright Futures offers three outreach opportunities to reach unserved children and is based on the latest research on the importance of providing literacy activities to unserved children during the summer. Another feature of Bright Future is its emphasis on data collection. This feature is intentional and a part of the other RTM projects. ICfL staff members say that they are, "Trying to educate the librarians to become more data driven," and, "encourage librarians to gain data to back-up programs." Participating librarians must provide output information and information about how they assessed the projects' quality and effectiveness.

#### Suggested improvements:

1) *Evaluate outcome targets:* Because Dr. Stewart started after the Plan was submitted, ICfL changed its original outcome targets to reflect his research. We suggest that ICfL continue to mine Dr. Stewart's findings to identify pertinent outcomes. For example, ICfL might consider selecting one outcome measure that seems most significant for each of the RTM projects and collect information on that particular piece through the next five-years. In some of these projects, ICfL already has a wealth of data on which to measure its success during the next-five years.

2) *Expand publicity:* ICfL should publicize the results of the studies of RTM. This recommendation intentionally repeats one made earlier in this report to emphasize its importance. Idaho librarians,

including academic librarians, want to know about the success of these programs. In light of the success of many of the RTM programs, evaluators recommend that ICfL should expand dissemination of the results to include other SLAAs, national professional early childhood associations, and other related organizations. ICfL should continue to highlight the RTM projects at national conferences.

3) *Consider changing the project evaluator:* As a part of part good business practices, organizations change auditors and attorneys to ensure objectivity and eliminate any bias. While Dr. Stewart has produced quality in-depth evaluations of the RTM programs, the evaluators recommend that ICfL consider bringing in a new evaluator every 5-6 years.

### **Talking Book Service**

**Background:** ICfL's Talking Book Service (TBS) provides public library services to those Idaho residents unable to read standard print due to a physical disability. The TBS delivers materials from the National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) to eligible residents. The TBS also records and loans material of local interest and provides technical assistance and readers' advisory services to its users.

According to the TBS, thirty thousand Idahoans are eligible to use the TBS. In FY 2011, 2,723 residents and 257 institutions were served by the service or 10% of the eligible population. A nine-member Advisory Committee advises and offers support to TBS staff. TBS surveys users biennially; staff members and the Advisory Committee review survey results to determine future priorities and changes. In addition, every two years a NLS Network Consultant visits TBS and provides ICfL a report with findings and recommendations.

In FY 2008, due to reduced state funding, ICfL began using LSTA funds to support most of TBS's operations. Because ICfL did not anticipate this switch when developing its Plan, ICfL's outcome and outputs targets for the TBS services are not as extensive as for other programs.

**Relation to LSTA purposes and ICfL Needs/Goals:** LSTA Purpose: TBS meets LSTA purpose 5. ICfL Needs/Goals: TBS meets Need 4, Goal C. (See Table 2: ICfL's LSTA goals, Statewide Programs, and LSTA Purposes Addressed.)

**Budget allocation:** ICfL spent the following LSTA funds on the TBS Program. Only three years of data are available.

Year	2008	2009	2010	Total
Amount	\$13,106	\$396,227	\$396,764	\$806,097

**Program's targets:** ICfL's Plan does not contain any outcome targets for TBS; the output targets include:

Target	2008	2009	2010	Evaluation
Increase the number of TBS patrons using their local public libraries by 5 percent annually.***	36% of 372 respondents to biennial survey		31% of 293 respondents to biennial survey	Not met
Increase the number of TBS patrons by 2 percent annually.	4,386 from 10/01/07 to 9/30/08	3,183	2,723* 15% decrease from 2009	Not met
Increase public library	20 libraries & one	Visited 18	Visited 13	Insufficient

Target	2008	2009	2010	Evaluation
promotion of TBS activities by 5 percent annually.	care facility posted TBS information. 200 participated in programs.	libraries; 22 library staff. TBS Awareness day, 16 libraries participated with 90 participants	libraries; 29 library staff TBS Awareness day (March 2011) 34 libraries participated in promoting the program. No library activities.	information to evaluate if target was met.

\*Decrease in part due to updated user file

TBS achieved results identified in the LSTA and the Plan: Although, TBS did not meet some of its targets in the Plan, TBS benefited its targeted group. Study participants identified a number of positive impacts from this project as detailed below.

Impact on Idaho libraries and users: Local librarians do not know the extent of the impact of TBS on users in their communities, because ICfL provides this service directly to the user, without a local library intermediary. Even though librarians may not know how many TBS users are in their communities and what TBS impacts are on users, survey respondents from all types of libraries rate the TBS fourth (3.90) in a list of nine statewide programs. Furthermore, respondents, who referred users to TBS, rated the continuation of TBS service very high, 4.55. As the following table shows, respondents who referred users to the TBS rated every aspect of TBS highly, except the question about saving money.

TBS surveyed its users biennially. Most survey questions concerned the users' satisfaction with the books, catalogs, and machines. TBS staff and their advisory committee used the survey results to make any necessary changes in TBS procedures. The survey contained a question to measure if respondents used their local public library, which is one of the Plan's targets. In addition, the 2008 survey of 372 respondents, 77% (286) rated the TBS service as excellent. In 2010, 85% (248) of total respondents gave TBS an excellent rating.

Answer Options	Rating Average	Response Count
TBS saved my library money because we did not have to buy as many audio books and other resources for this population.	3.65	80
I understand how to refer library users to TBS.	4.19	80
TBS is essential for my library to serve people in my community who cannot read standard print due to a physical disability.	4.25	80
The ICfL should continue to support the TBS.	4.55	80

Survey comments about TBS were almost all positive, many reflecting the opinion that TBS is a great and much needed service. Two respondents expressed frustration that potential users and their caregivers do not let libraries know about their needs. One respondent said, "With the amount of books on tape, books on CD and e-audios, TBS is not as essential as it was in the past." Respondents also suggested TBS improvements including providing a link to the TBS catalog on local catalogs and increasing promotion.

Confirming the positive results about TBS from the survey, focus group participants were uniformly supportive of this program; however, overall, only 10 participants gave the continuation of TBS a high priority. Focus group suggestions included the following:

- Provide statistics on use of the program for people from their library.
- Provide information on TBS during the RTM sessions. Share with the attendees how many people in Idaho could take advantage of the program.

Ten focus group participants rated TBS a high priority, 8 rated it a medium priority and 2 rated it a low priority.

Suggested improvements:

*1. Continue to promote TBS to build the number of users and coordinate with larger agency efforts.*

We see three market segments for promotion – libraries; other individuals or organizations serving the TBS population; and potential TBS users. TBS has engaged in marketing to all these segments and librarians appreciate these efforts but ask for more. In October 2011, radio stations received an engaging PSA promoting TBS, which directed listeners to go to a website “neverstopreading.org.” TBS has not yet maximized this site to engage visitors or provide any audio capability for potential users. The brochures and display materials that TBS offers to libraries and other organizations have a different tag line, “Endless possibilities,” than the PSA. We recommend that any campaign use the same brand, taglines, and other uniform design elements.

*2. Define desired results for local libraries and TBS users and then define the OBE strategies to measure these results.* Standardize measurements. Consider contracting with an evaluator to develop these strategies, including a revision of the biannual survey to collect OBE information. Collect the same measurements each year to measure progress.

*3. Seek cost-saving opportunities with other states’ TBS.* TBS services are very expensive considering the cost per user. Of course, TBS provides personalized services to those who have special needs, who may be hard to reach and require special promotion efforts and specialized materials. In addition to the higher costs of providing services to an audience with special needs, TBS provides a unique service by recording Idaho materials of interest to its users and to other TBS users regardless of where they live. However, development of digital players and downloadable books has made it possible to think about cooperative, cost-saving activities with other states. When the transition from cassette tapes and players is final, SLAAs will not require as much storage area. We suggest that ICfL start discussing cooperative efforts with neighboring states or like-minded states. In fact, other more populous states, Illinois and Pennsylvania, have considered or made structural changes in their TBS programs.

TBS is now a “high-tech” enterprise and should keep its services “high-touch” offering one-to-one services including readers’ advisory and technical assistance to its users. The suggestion to explore cooperative efforts with other states is not a recommendation for a service-model change from one that features friendly, helpful, and compassionate service to individuals. We only suggest that changes in technology coupled with imperatives to seek cost savings should spur SLAAs to look at changes in each service.

## **Tweens and Teens**

**Background:** Tweens and Teens (T&T) provides services to young people between the ages of approximately 9 to 18 years, and training and assistance to librarians serving that age group. Programs for tweens and teens included Teen Read Week, Teen-Tech Week, and the Teen Video Challenge. To ensure the success of these programs, T&T offered training to library staff about, for

example, technology popular with tweens and teens, and how to incorporate these technologies and skills into programs.

ICfL started this program by offering a workshop through ALA's Teens and Tech initiative and has expanded the program to offer libraries a menu of programs similar to the approach of the Read to Me program, discussed elsewhere in this report.

Relation to LSTA purposes and ICfL Needs/Goals: LSTA Purpose: T&T meets LSTA purpose number 6. ICfL Needs/Goals: T&T meets Need 3, Goal A and Need 4, Goal C. (See Table 1: ICfL's LSTA goals, Statewide Programs, and LSTA Purposes Addressed.)

Budget allocation: ICfL spent the following LSTA funds on the T&T Program. For the expanded program, only one year's data is available.

Year	2008	2009	2010	Total
Amount	\$9,281	\$7,022	\$396,764	\$413,067

Program's targets: ICfL identified one outcome target in the Plan applicable to T&T.

Target	2008	2009	2010	Evaluation
Maintain an average of 12 attendees for CE events targeting services for all library users.	18	16	40	Met and exceeded

Although the Plan contains only one target related to T&T, program managers set annual output and outcome measures for its activities and measure progress toward those targets over time. Managers started to collect baseline data on all measures in 2010. Overall, T&T has two outcome targets. One is to have all libraries create an environment where tweens and teens are welcome and the other is to instill an attitude in this age group that libraries have a variety of services and resources to meet their needs.

As in other ICfL programs, T&T managers assessed the effectiveness of training by measuring course participants' perceptions about their abilities and knowledge before and after course participation. T&T managers also measured any change in course participants' attitudes by counting the number of programs that they offer to tweens and teens after course participation.

To understand if T&T programs made a difference in the number of library users from this age group, ICfL also asked libraries how many teens participated in programming and how many cards they issued to this age group. T&T managers acknowledged that these statistics do not measure if tweens and teens continue to use the library or achieve the outcome of improving the library's image. A T&T report states that another barrier to measuring this outcome is the difficulty of receiving feedback from older teens and suggests the target audience for T&T is really Grades 6-9.

T&T achieved results identified in the LSTA and the Plan: Although the T&T Program is relatively new, T&T has already benefited its target group. Study participants identified a number of positive impacts from this project as detailed below.

Impact on Idaho libraries and users: Survey respondents from all types of libraries rated T&T 3.95, fourth in a list of nine statewide programs. In addition, the 129 respondents who identified their community's needs for the next five years selected "serving teenagers" as eighth in a list of 19



potential needs. Furthermore, respondents who participated in T&T services strongly agreed, 4.45, that ICfL should continue to support the program. These respondents also strongly agreed, 4.10, that T&T is essential to their libraries' service.

Survey responses about this program's impact on the targeted age group reflect the concern of T&T program managers that T&T has not yet increased tweens' and teens' library use. Survey respondents who participated in T&T only somewhat agreed, 3.76, with the statement "My library received more use" by this age group, and few agreed, 3.14, with the statement that the library received media coverage because of T&T.

Answer Options	Rating Average	Response Count
My library has received more use by Tweens and Teens because we participated in the ICfL projects.	3.76	51
The library received media coverage about our services or programs inspired or sponsored by ICfL for Tween and Teens.	3.14	51
The projects aimed at Tweens and Teens are an essential part of my library's services.	4.08	51
ICfL should continue to offer projects aimed at Tweens and Teens.	4.45	51

Survey comments about T&T were overwhelming positive. The following comments are typical of those received, "These programs have helped us reach a population which doesn't always avail themselves of everything a public library has to offer!", and "They are more aware that the library is a fun, social place." Also notable is the comment from a first time participant who wrote, "We had minimal success, but we're not giving up."

Confirming the positive survey results about T&T, focus groups participants were uniformly supportive of this program; however, only seven participants gave the continuation of T&T a high priority, but 13 said that this program was a medium priority.

Participants identified benefits for library staff. One said that T&T "opens a new world for staff, non-certified and certified alike." Participants also cited a number of positive impacts regarding tweens' and teens' use of the library, including, "The library has become a cool place to be," and "Tweens just pour into the library and they stay, teens love being there."

Focus group participants also suggested improvements, including more frequent technology courses, because of the fast pace of change in technology. They also suggested sharing the results of the programs with all libraries; one academic librarian said, "If we know about the program, that way we know what to look for from the entering students."

Among the focus group participants, the Tweens and Teens program received a high priority rating by 7 participants, a medium rating by 13 participants and a low rating by 2.

#### Suggested improvements

1. *Continue the focus on data collection and analysis for T&T projects.* Program managers are focused on the important outcomes and are creative at finding ways not only to work towards these outcomes, but also to measure their success. To measure the T&T outcomes, ICfL might consider identifying a group of tweens and teens to follow in a longitudinal study, measuring their attitudes and library usage over a number of years.



2. *Publicize successes.* The T&T website contains information on all aspects of the program. Program managers can distill this information to share with librarians in all types of libraries and with similar statewide programs in other states. In addition, survey responses showed that participants did not receive much media coverage. One of this study's overall recommendations is that ICfL adopt and implement a marketing plan. T&T programs can be a focus in this endeavor.

## **IMLS Evaluation Questions**

### Process Questions

1. *Were modifications made to the SLAA's plan? If so, please specify the modifications and if they were informed by outcome-based data.* 2. *If modifications were made to the SLAA's plan, how were performance metrics used in guiding those decisions?* As noted in this report, ICfL made a change in two Need statements in the Plan and one Goal. The first change in Need II dropped the phrase "digital natives" and replaced with a more generic statement. ICfL staff members said this phrase was "outdated," they wanted the Need and Goal, which was also changed by eliminating "digital natives," to refer to every Idaho resident regardless of age and generation. ICfL staff made this change by analyzing trends, conducting informal research, and considering feedback from librarians.

ICfL also made a change in Need IV of the Plan. This change added the phrase, "the ever present economic challenges," to the original statement that read, "Idaho libraries must sustain an infrastructure that provides for services in an atmosphere of innovation and change." ICfL made this change to reflect the economic downturn.

2. *How have performance metrics been used to guide policy and managerial decisions?* ICfL encouraged all of its advisory groups, including the Continuing Education and Talking Book Advisory Committees, the LiLI Steering Committee, and the School Library Action Planning Committee, to make use of statistics to suggest policies and procedures to ICfL. For example, the TBS statistical reports are a standing topic of discussion at its Advisory Committee meetings.

ICfL also relies on feedback from the library community through the placement of its library field consultants in three regions of the state. In addition, Boise-based ICfL staff members travel to other parts of the state and are involved in Idaho Library Association activities.

We found that ICfL is a data-driven organization, collecting pertinent data, analyzing the data, and making corrections in programs based on that analysis.

3. *Challenges to Using Outcome-Based Data to Guide Policy and Managerial Decisions:* ICfL staff members identified several challenges to using outcome-based data to guide policy and managerial decisions. Although ICfL provides sub-grant applicants an OBE logic model with each application and provides technical assistance about outcome-based evaluation (OBE), ICfL does not require applicants to use OBE methods in funded projects.

In addition, ICfL funds LSTA projects for one year. Standard outcome evaluation methods generally require that a project last more than one year. Some sub-grantees collect pre- and post-intervention measures, but most use "attendance" and other output measures as success indicators.

Generally, ICfL was successful using OBE in its statewide programs. This evaluation described this success at using OBE in the individual program evaluations above.

### Prospective Questions

*1. How will lessons learned about improving the use of outcome-based evaluation inform the state's next five-year plan? 2. How does the SLAA plan to share performance metrics and other evaluation-related information within and outside of the SLAA to inform policy and administrative decisions during the next five years? 3. How can the performance data collected and analyzed to date be used to identify benchmarks in the upcoming five-year plan?*

This evaluation of the Plan has produced substantial new information from the survey, focus groups, and from a synthesis of existing data and reports. This new information can inform decisions that ICfL will make in the preparation of the new Five-Year Plan.

In tandem with this evaluation, ICfL engaged in a robust planning project to develop the New Plan. Indeed, ICfL has held visioning sessions with the Board of Commissioners, CE and TBS Advisory committees, Library Development staff members, the LiLi Steering Committee, the LSTA Advisory Council, and Special Projects Library Action Team (SPLAT) members. SPLAT was created to act in the 'crow's nest' capacity, searching for innovation, proposing and leading experiments and pilot projects, and discovering new opportunities.

Again, the ICfL field consultants play a major role in transmitting the future needs of their constituents to the rest of ICfL. ICfL also plans to use documents such as OCLC trend reports, state demographic and planning reports, and IMLS studies and reports in their planning effort. ICfL plans to triangulate information about local needs with information about national needs and trends.

*4. What key lessons has the SLAA learned about using outcome-based evaluation that other States could benefit from knowing? Include what worked and what should be changed.* Although ICfL identified problems with outcome-based evaluations, listed above, overall ICfL has been diligent in devising OBE methods and using results in program planning. As stated under the "Key Findings" of this report, ICfL should continue to publicize its OBE efforts in the Read to Me programs.

Another ICfL process that other states might adopt is the use of a uniform template for continuing education opportunities that agency staff uses in all ICfL programs. Program managers can adjust the template to reflect the needs of their program; however, ICfL requires certain elements to ensure consistent data collection and analysis.

### Describe the Evaluation Methodology

*1. Identify how the State Library Administrative Agency (SLAA) implemented the selection of an independent evaluator using IMLS criteria.* The ICfL issued a Request for Quotes (RFQ) containing details of the project and requirements for the evaluators. ICfL staff reviewed each submission to judge the evaluators' ability to carry out the requirements of the evaluation as stipulated in IMLS' guidelines. The ICfL selected Nancy Bolt & Associates.

*2. Describe the types of statistical and qualitative methods used in conducting the evaluation. Include administrative information as well.* The types of methods used to conduct this evaluation are described in detail in other parts of this report. The following provides administration information about these methods.

Document review: Evaluators found documents on ICfL's website and ICfL provided documents independently and upon request of the evaluators. Interviews: ICfL staff members made themselves available for interviews and identified two LSTA Advisory Council members available for in-person interviews in Boise. Survey: Evaluators used Survey Monkey to administer the

survey. Evaluators provided ICfL with draft survey announcements and frequent reports on the number of respondents. ICfL sent reminders to Idaho's library community through their usual communication venues. Focus Groups: Evaluators provided criteria for ICfL to use to select group participants. ICfL invited attendees and provided them with the focus group agenda and information about LSTA-funded programs before the meetings.

*3. Document any tradeoffs made in the selection and implementation of the selected evaluation methods.* The project's schedule required a January survey, which started just as K-12 schools and colleges resumed classes after the winter break. To ensure that employees in these types of libraries participated in the survey, ICfL sent multiple messages throughout the survey's duration.

Evaluators believe that focus groups should follow the analysis of the survey's results to allow for further investigation of outlier or unexpected information found in the survey. This strategy and the project's schedule required evaluators to conduct focus groups in late January, a time of potentially dangerous driving considerations. To avoid subjecting participants to these conditions, evaluators conducted the Northern Idaho focus group session using Abode Content. While initially concerned that the online technology would be a barrier for participation, we found the participants were actively engaged throughout the session. All focus group participants were provided a summary of the LSTA-funded statewide programs and the discussion guide.

*4. Discuss strategies used for disseminating and communicating the key findings and recommendations.* The ICfL will make this evaluation report widely available to Idaho's library community by announcing its availability in posts to listservs, announcements in newsletters and by posting on its website. These postings are a very effective method of reaching most of Idaho's libraries. The ICfL will also share the report as they work with libraries in Idaho to develop the new Five-Year Plan.

*5. Assess the validity and reliability of the data used for conducting this evaluation study.* Evaluators used simple coding to highlight significant information in documents. Evaluators did not perform any statistical testing on the survey results and all reports included in this report are simple frequency tables and cross tabs, to illuminate important findings. Evaluators used basic coding techniques to analyze focus group meeting records. The coding system is hierarchical, starting with general program categories followed by sub-categories. Evaluators coded each focus group report independently and then combined the reports, retaining location codes to check for any regional variations. See Annex H for more detail.

## **Annexes**

Annex A: List of acronyms

Annex B: IMLS Retrospective, Process, and Prospective Questions

Annex C: People consulted and interviewed

Annex D: Bibliography of documents reviewed

Annex E: ICfL LSTA Five Year evaluation survey and survey results (Separate file)

Annex F: Focus group agenda and report

Annex G: Smart Start Meeting Agenda

Annex H: Survey Analysis

Annex I: Future Needs and Priorities

## **Annex A**

### **List of Acronyms**

ABLE	Alternative Basic Library Education
F2F	Face to Face
ICfL	Idaho Commission for Libraries
ILA	Idaho Library Association
ILL	Interlibrary Loan
IMLS	Institute of Museum and Library Services
LiLI	Libraries Linking Idaho
LiLI-D	LiLI Database program
LiLI-U	LiLI Unlimited
LSTA	Library Services and Technology Act
NB&A	Nancy Bolt & Associates
OBE	Outcome-based Evaluation
RTM	Read to Me
SABLE	Supplemental Alternative Basic Library Education
SLAA	State Library Administrative Agency
SPLAT	Special Projects Library Action Team
TBS	Talking Books Service
T&T	Tweens and Teens Program

## **Annex B**

### **IMLS Retrospective, Process, and Prospective Questions**

#### *Retrospective Questions*

1. Did the activities undertaken through the state's LSTA plan achieve results related to priorities identified in the Act?
2. To what extent were these results due to choices made in the selection of strategies?
3. To what extent did these results relate to subsequent implementation?
4. To what extent did programs and services benefit targeted individuals and groups?

#### *Process Questions*

1. Were modifications made to the SLAA's plan? If so, please specify the modifications and if they were informed by outcome-based data?
2. If modifications were made to the SLAA's plan, how were performance metrics used in guiding those decisions?
3. How have performance metrics been used to guide policy and managerial decisions affecting the SLAA's LSTA supported programs and services?
4. What have been important challenges to using outcome-based data to guide policy and managerial decisions over the past five years?

#### *Prospective Questions*

1. How does the SLAA plan to share performance metrics and other evaluation-related information within and outside of the SLAA to inform policy and administrative decisions during the next five years?
2. How can the performance data collected and analyzed to date be used to identify benchmarks in the upcoming five-year plan?
3. What key lessons has the SLAA learned about using outcome-based evaluation that other States could benefit from knowing? Include what worked and what should be changed.

## **Annex C**

### **People Consulted and Interviewed**

#### Idaho Commission for Libraries:

Marj Hooper, Associate State Librarian  
Kevin Tomlinson, Field Consultant  
Jan Wall, Field Consultant  
Ann Joslin, State Librarian  
Sonja Hudson, Grants Officer  
Sue Walker, Consultant, Talking Book, Outreach services, Teens, and Mid-Life Adults  
Stephanie Bailey-White, Project Coordinator, Read to Me (RTM)  
Staci Shaw, Project Coordinator, Read to Me  
Erica Compton, Project Coordinator, Read to Me, Teens, and Mid-Life Adults  
Gina Persichini, Networking Consultant, Libraries Linking Idaho (LiLI) services  
Shirley Biladeau, Continuing Education Consultant, CE sub-grants to libraries, CE & training, WebJunction, SPLAT  
Glynda Pflieger, School Library Consultant  
Frank Nelson, Field Consultant and Statistics  
Teresa Lipus, Public Information Specialist  
Aubrey Ellis, Web Developer, e-Branch in a Box program  
Roger Dubois, Administrative Services Manager

#### LSTA Advisory Committee members:

Vicki Kreimeyer, formerly Boise Public Library, currently independent librarian, 7 years on Council, chair as 3 years  
Lisa Zeiter, Director, Garden City Library

#### Focus Group Attendees

There were a total of 23 participants in 3 regionally based library focus groups.



## Annex D: Bibliography of all Documents Reviewed

### 2007

- Idaho Commission for Libraries. (2007). *Success Stories from LiLI*.
- Idaho Commission for Libraries. (2007) *Library Services and Technology Act Plan, 2008-2012*.

### 2008

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- Stewart, Roger. (2010). *Read to Me Program Evaluation Report, 2009-2010. Case Studies of Idaho Public Library ICFL Support Programs and Analyses of Idaho Reading Indicator Scores*. <http://libraries.idaho.gov/files/Case-Studies2009-2010.pdf>

## 2011

- Idaho Commission for Libraries (2011). *Library Services and Act Technology Plan 2008-2012, Revised March 2011*. Submitted to the Institute of Museum and Library Services.
- Idaho Commission for Libraries. *FY10 Federal Support for Libraries; Annual Report, December, 2011*.
- Idaho Commission for Libraries (2011). *LiLI Database Training Evaluation 2011*.
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- *Site Visit Report. National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped*. (2011). Vickie Collins, Network Consultant. April 11 -12, 2011
- Stewart, Roger A. (2011). *Every Child Ready to Read Family Workshops: Analysis of Longitudinal Data: Fall 2008 to fall 2010*. <http://libraries.idaho.gov/files/ECRTR-Report-2011.pdf>
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## **Annex E:**

### **ICfL LSTA Five Year evaluation survey and survey results**

The Survey Summary is a separate document. It presents the questions with the results first followed by the questions with free-form responses and comments. All respondents' names have been redacted.

**Annex F**  
**Focus Group Agenda and Report**  
January 25 and 26, 2012

1. Introductory information—Karen Strege

Introductions: participants and facilitators

Background information on purpose of focus groups

Objectives

- Obtain impact data on key statewide programs funded with LSTA funds.
- Obtain input on needs of Idaho libraries in the next five years to better serve their users.
- Obtain input on priorities for the use of LSTA funds in the next five years.
- Process agreement

2. Evaluation of key LSTA statewide programs-Liz Bishoff

For each of the statewide LSTA programs below we will be asking:

- Impact of this project on Idaho residents and libraries, including both training of librarians and delivery of the service
- Improvements that could help this project have more impact
- Perceived value of continuing the program

Programs chosen for discussion are:

- LiLI networking activities, including LiLI-Unlimited
- Youth Programs, including Read to Me, Summer Reading Program, and Teen Program
- Continuing education, including mini-grants for First Time Attendees and Professional development programs
- Competitive grants
- Talking Book Service

3. Of the statewide projects that ICfL is currently funding with LSTA funds, which is so valuable that statewide funding should be continued until major circumstances change? Liz Bishoff

4. What do libraries need in the next five years to meet the needs of your library's current and future users? –Karen Strege

5. Which of these needs are so important they should become statewide projects with long-term LSTA funding? Liz Bishoff

Two potential models

- Statewide direct funding LiLI-Unlimited
- Statewide focus on a topic for competitive grants

6. What did you come here today to tell us that you didn't get to say? Karen Strege

7. Next Steps

Idaho LSTA Evaluation Focus Group Report  
January 31, 2012

Three focus groups were conducted with representatives of the library community, two in person and one via the web. This report summarizes the findings from those focus groups organized into the major programs offered and managed by the Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL). It also includes a ranking of the priority placed on these services by focus group participants and observations on major trends identified that can be further explored in the ICfL's development of the next LSTA Five-Year Plan. The information collected in the focus groups is qualitative and anecdotal. The word "impact" reports the opinions of the participants on the ICfL statewide programs and services. The agenda used with the Focus Groups and the handout about the ICfL services is above.

As part of the introductory comments, the consultants reviewed the purpose of the focus group, the role of the consultants in the projects, and the importance of confidentiality. The following summarizes the input from the three focus groups. Statements that appear in quotes reflect direct quotes of the participants. To assure confidentiality there is no attribution.

### LiLI-Unlimited

The discussion began with defining the LiLI-Unlimited (LiLI-U) program. LiLI-U includes the statewide union catalog hosted by OCLC and cataloging and interlibrary loan services also available through OCLC.

#### Impact:

All focus groups found value in LiLI-U, focusing on increased access to the state's library resources; supporting the information resource needs of all sizes and types of libraries, with particular importance to small rural libraries. Of particular note was the availability of OCLC cataloging and resource sharing services. Focus group comments included:

- [LiLI-U] opens up a huge world
- It's a timesaver, rush items are available in 24 hours.
- LiLI-U is more valuable than ever before. It will be a source of cataloging information.
- "It is our portal to the world"
- "Rural libraries connect patrons with the rest of the world."

#### Suggested Improvements:

- Offer training more frequently
- "Make certain all libraries are participating. Cost is an issue and concern for the non-participating libraries."

### Read to Me Program

Read to Me (RTM) includes several programs targeted toward Pre-K through elementary school children. The programs are targeted to public libraries working in partnership with schools, daycare centers and parents. This evaluation looked at the overarching program, rather than individual components of the RTM program.

#### Impact:

- "...with the program to our elementary school we brought their K-1 reading efforts from where they were to a GemStar school in 1 year."

- One of the most important aspects of the program is the involvement of parents. Parents realize that early literacy skills are important; they are singing to their kids, these are important skills when they get to school.
- Real impact of RTM programs is it allowed us to break into the daycare centers; it has been a big program. We also go up to the schools in the summer during free lunch program. We give away books at these programs. We saw a huge increase in the kids program as a result of the outreach, in spite of our school population declining.
- “Programs like this are essential to development of reading and comprehension skills in those early years. It’s clear that it’s very valuable.
- “...have a waiting list for multiple programs offered each day.”
- Give away thousands of books; brings people into the library, putting a face on the place.
- The parents follow the kids to the library.
- One 3 year old stated, “When I grow-up I want to be a library guy and give away free books.”
- Juvenile circulation has increased from 33% to 47% of total circulation over the last 2-3 years; the outreach is a major factor. “People feel connected to the Library.”
- Increased partnerships with the reservations, partnering with the reservation library, which has increased their library’s usage.
- “We have to go to the voters every two years for a levy—it has passed by a higher percentage each time, we attribute that to the RTM”
- “Adds a lot to the image of the library; makes the library indispensable to the community and this program really helps that.”
- Teach kids value of reading; teach parent value of early childhood literacy.
- Area daycare centers wouldn’t be providing literacy without RTM
- RTM is good for community development—working with schools, WIC and other organizations
- Helped our school get Star certification and now they want to keep it.

#### Suggested improvements:

- I’ve heard that the titles that are offered are always the same. JumpStart has the same book every year, and parents with multiple kids would like different titles.
- Transportation is an issue for parents. Funding outreach really helps this; we can go out and meet with different areas. We can impact more people, but getting the kids to the library is a challenge for parents.
- Share the results of the program more widely. Idaho libraries need to know the results of the program, what it involves
- Outstanding—don’t change anything
- Without publicity hard to get new people—recommend booth at State Fair and kidsfest.

### Tweens and Teens

Program began with Teens and Technology workshops designed to expand the knowledge and understanding of technology and digital natives. Tweens and Teens program includes both training of library workers and targeted programs that libraries can offer to this age group.

#### Impact:

- Teen Tech Week, the kids eagerly await it; the library has become a cool place to be
- Teens and Tech Course was attended by certified and non-certified staff; wonderful incentives as part of the program

- Attitude adjustment for the kids
- Opens a new world for staff
- Not a lot of other training programs on working with teens; provides resources and builds confidence, offer more programs, not just once a year.
- “Tweens just pour into the library and they stay, teens love being there.”
- Program lets teens know that we value them as patrons.
- Tweens and teens are our biggest challenge, they’re here but we’re having problem corralling them, they prefer to use Facebook. We found if we let them hang around they will talk books with us.
- Transportation is an issue. Have a small number of town kids that we see. We’re working with a few of them to do organized things to attract their peers.

#### Suggested Improvements:

- Offer tech courses throughout the year, there’s so much change with teens, need to be current
- Develop a Tweens only course.
- Provide programs that provide the opportunity for fun things, like video programs. This will pull in more teens
- Share results of the program more widely. Other libraries are interested, particularly academic libraries. “That way we know what to look for from the entering students.”
- Not a program issue—we don’t have space to allocate to this audience.

### Competitive Grants

ICfL offers a competitive grant program for individual libraries and consortia in years when there is money available. Two grant programs are offered: the competitive grant program and the Just in Time program. Nearly all of the focus group participants had applied for and received one or both of these ICfL grants.

#### Impact:

- We had a teen-parent program and couldn’t have done it without LSTA grant. Free books make friends. We went to the teen-parent groups at the schools. We are now funding the program ourselves.
- We had a demonstration grant for a district project. It failed, but we learned a lot and led to next steps.
- Support from ICfL is exceptional, both in writing the grant and implementation.
- We were able to start a program with LSTA and sustain it with local money.
- Shows that libraries can be models for other libraries
- Training in competitive grants made me more confident. “I thought the process was daunting before the training, but after the training it was ok.”

#### Suggested Improvements:

- Need to increase the awareness of the training from the commission
- Would like to have examples of successful programs. Ask the project managers to talk to others who are interested.
- Define or expand the criteria for the underserved to include inadequately served. Grants aren’t very accessible for rural libraries.



## Continuing Education

ICfL offers a variety of continuing education programs through the various statewide programs and by offering grants that support attendance at conferences and formal education including graduate programs and support staff certification. CE also makes available OCLC's WebJunction Service, the ABLE and SABLE programs.

### Impact:

- "[The grants] were so helpful in me going from library associate to librarian. I used it every semester."
- "I attended conferences that opened my world, I felt like a partner in a grand profession with wonderful ideas."
- Helped classified staffs in school learn technology; helped certified staffs in district meet professional educational needs that can't be gotten through the school. "Certified staff gains vision of what can be."
- WebJunction stretches our training dollars
- Web Junction—I use it all the time, when I have a new program or project I look to Web Junction to learn about it.
- Online and self-paced workshops are used exclusively in our small rural library
- Always bring back good ideas
- "Everything we learn we learn through the Commission"
- All staff are required to take WebJunction courses, it's part of the performance goals
- ABLE and SABLE are used for new staff that doesn't have library experience. Board requires ABLE and SABLE as part of annual review.
- Web Junction is made available to our library foundation members.
- "Bookmobile manager attended the rural libraries conference; from that conference we grew our outreach department. It now has 5 employees and 5 bookmobiles."
- Patrons benefit from the training; see service improvements as a result of the CE grants.

### Suggested improvements:

- Streamline the application process, 12 pages is too long to get funding for a conference; North Carolina has a 2 page application.
- Hard to prove what you'll learn before you go; need to look at a different approach to gaining this information.
- Look at ways to make the impact section more realistic. We can provide the concrete results after we attend the conference.
- Need RDA training.
- Increase promotion of the continuing education programs.

## Talking Books Service

The Commission provides the statewide Talking Books Service (TBS) to all residents who are eligible.

### Impact:

- When we use it we get a lot of smiles, however we don't use it a lot. It's a unique service,
- Through the 'Let's talking about it' program we can get talking book titles; provide access to the same book through both programs. "We are eternally grateful for that."

- This is an area where the state library fills the gap, we couldn't provide these services without the state library
- People who are in the program are a walking advertisement for the program. With the new digital players we're seeing how it goes. Word of mouth promotion is important.
- People in the community say how much it impacts their libraries; there should be broader awareness of the program

Suggested improvements:

- Provide statistics on use of the program for people from their library.
- Provide information on TBS during the RTM sessions. Share with the attendees how many people in Idaho could take advantage of the program.

### e-Branch in a box

ICfL provides an out of the box website solution for libraries. While many of the focus group attendees were aware of the service, only a few were using it.

Impact:

- Real boon, people are using it
- Lots of support eliminating the fear factor
- Wonderful program, provides patrons access to the catalog; our library depends on it
- We wanted a grant and having web presence was required; we got it through e-Branch

Suggested Improvements:

- Brush-up would be good. Need to review and refresh skills, possible gain advanced skills.
- More training, at least annually, would like something like the Learning Express tutorials

### Priorities for Continued Funding

Participants were asked to rank the statewide programs.

	<b>Idaho Focus Group LSTA Priorities</b>			
	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Total</b>
LiLI-U and Networking	10	12	2	24
Read to Me	22	1		23
Tweens and Teens	7	13	3	23
Continuing Education	11	10	2	23
Competitive Grants	8	11	4	23
Talking Book Service	10	8	2	20

E Branch in a box	2	4	11	17
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One participant suggested that ICfL “Build a three-location round robin for all libraries and possibly business leaders on how libraries and literacy impact Idaho.”

### Future Needs

*E-books:* All focus groups indicated that a Statewide E-book program would be an important addition to the ICfL programs. Many of the small rural libraries indicated that they could not develop an affordable program with the current service providers.

*Childhood literacy:* Meeting childhood literacy skills was also identified as an important need for the future. Libraries indicated that they want to expand collaboration with other organizations. ICfL should expand the RTM program.

*Staff training:* Training of staff continues to be a need. Emerging trends and technology require training.

*Facilities:* Construction and renovation dollars are needed. We need space for the Young Adults, computer labs and other needed services.

*Partnerships:* More help in reaching partners to help them understand the value of pre-literate skills. Need to catch the kids early.

*Link to Education:* Children’s programs need to be linked to education in the advocacy efforts. Promote the value of education.

## Annex G

### Smart Start Meeting Agenda

December 13, 2011

1:00 to 4:30

#### Smart Start Meeting participants:

- Idaho Commission for Libraries:
  - Ann Joslin, State Librarian
  - Marj Hooper, Associate State Librarian
  - Roger Dubois, Administrative Services Manager
  - ICfL staff with LSTA funds program responsibility: Sonja Hudson, Grants Officer
  - Sue Walker, Consultant, Talking Book, Outreach services, Teens, and Mid-Life Adults
  - Stephanie Bailey-White, Project Coordinator, Read to Me (RTM)
  - Staci Shaw, Project Coordinator, Read to Me
  - Erica Compton, Project Coordinator, Read to Me, Teens, and Mid-Life Adults
  - Gina Persichini, Networking Consultant, Libraries Linking Idaho (LiLI) services
  - Shirley Biladeau, Continuing Education Consultant, CE sub-grants to libraries, CE & training, WebJunction, SPLAT
  - Glynda Pflieger, School Library Consultant, School Library Planning and the *Idaho School Library Impact Study - 2009: How Idaho Librarians, Teachers, and Administrators Collaborate for Student Success (Idaho Commission For Libraries, 2010)*
  - Frank Nelson, Eastern Idaho Consultant, Statistics- Public Library & School and the *Idaho School Library Impact Study - 2009: How Idaho Librarians, Teachers, and Administrators Collaborate for Student Success (Idaho Commission For Libraries, 2010)*
  - Teresa Lipus, Public Information Specialist, newsletters
  - Aubrey Ellis, Web Developer, e-Branch in a Box program
  - Dian Scott, Offices Services Supervisor 2, Let's Talk About It (LTAI)

Liz Bishoff and Karen Strege, Nancy Bolt & Associates

**Smart Start meeting:** Participants in this session will include appropriate ICfL staff overseeing the Plan evaluation to discuss and verify all aspects of the evaluation project. At this meeting, we propose to discuss the following:

- Confirm the project's goals and process
- Discuss and coordinate all aspects of the work plan
- Determine the preliminary schedule for the survey and tentative content
- Determine the schedule for the focus groups and tentative content
  - decide if to use in person or the web-based approach and
  - determine the process for selecting and inviting focus group participants
- Identify other people to interview during the evaluation process.
- Identify needed documents
- Confirm timeline for all activities and deliverables
- Ascertain any special circumstances that might impact the project
- Agree on the duties and responsibilities of the consultants and ICfL staff
- Discuss and agree upon methods to inform and update Idaho's Library Community about the evaluation

## **Annex H**

### **Survey Analysis**

Because many of the survey questions received only a few answers, evaluators did not draw conclusions from those responses. For example, a question about the outcomes of the RTM First Book Project received 34 responses, with most respondents rating the items very highly. Only the statement, “My library received media coverage about the RTM First Book Project, received a “poor” rating. However, the number of responses is too low for ICFL to attempt to generalize to all participants in the RTM First Book project. Therefore, evaluators encourage ICfL to review the survey’s results with their other data sources to provide multiple viewpoints on their programs. For example, ICfL commissioned studies of RTM projects; in addition, they asked project participants to provide outcome information at the end of each project. These multiple evaluations provide a rich body of data to examine together.

Evaluators examined the data using crosstabs only when the responses equaled 75 or more, which is almost one-half of the survey respondents. This number might be a large enough to suggest that similarities and differences in responses between location of the respondents, type of library, job type, and size of library, might be important. However, when this analysis was complete, we found that the number of respondents in some categories, for example, responders from school libraries, was very low. Our conclusion is that, without statistical testing, ICfL should not draw conclusions about subgroups solely upon the crosstab reports.

Evaluators provided the raw data to ICfL and will make it available other researchers to perform other statistical analysis.

## Appendix I

### Future Needs and Priorities

To aid the ICfL in developing the LSTA Plan for the next five years, the evaluators incorporated questions on future needs and priorities in both the survey and focus group session. Idaho librarians were asked to prioritize the current LSTA-funded ICfL statewide programs and to identify specific future needs of their libraries and library users.

#### Needs

##### *Issues facing communities in next five years*

Survey respondents were asked what were the “Top five issues facing their communities in the next five years.” Each respondent could select up to five priorities. The following ranking is based on the responses of 137 respondents.

Priority	# of responses	Percentage
Lack of jobs	90	66.4%
Decreased government funding for education	72	52.6%
High unemployment rate	69	50.4%
Decreased government funding for libraries	55	40.1%
Poverty	53	38.7%

The lowest priority issues included:

Priority	# of responses	Percentage
Homelessness	12	8.8%
Transportation services	21	15.3%
Population growth	22	16.1%
Decreased population	26	19%
Services to non-English speakers	30	21.9%

Focus group participants confirmed that unemployment was a major problem for Idahoans, however they also identified supporting and funding education as a major issue. Participants from small, rural libraries noted that transportation is a major issue in their communities, impacting use of library services.

##### *Library priorities for next five years*

Survey respondents were asked “Based on community needs what are your library’s top five priorities for the next five years.” Each respondent could select up to five priorities. The following are the top priorities based on responses of 137 survey participants:

Priority	# of responses	Percentage
Promoting library value to the community	72	52.6%

Collecting emerging formats, like e-books	70	51.1%
Improving collections	65	47.5%
Making sure children develop literacy skills	57	41.6%
Provide training for current staff members	56	40.9%

Other high priority needs include teaching computer and other library technology skills 38% or 52 responses; serving teens 35% or 48 responses; and teaching information literacy skills 33.6% or 46 responses.

The respondents indicated that the following are their lowest priorities:

Priority	# of responses	Percentage
Help library users find information about government services	4	2.9%
Attracting trained staff members	9	6.6%
Use social networking for library	10	7.3%
Serving mid-life adults	12	8.8%
Help library users find information on improving job seeking skills	18	13.1%

#### *Priority of Statewide Programs, 2013-2017*

Based on the survey and the focus group results, ICfL statewide programs are favorably received. Focus group participants were asked to rank each program as a high, medium, or low priority for the next five years. The Read to Me program received the highest number of 'High Priority' votes, followed by the Continuing Education program, LiLI-Unlimited and the Talking Book Service. The Read to Me Program responds to the need of "Making sure children develop literacy skills." The Continuing Education program responds to the need to provide training for current library staff members.

Statewide Program	High	Medium	Low
Read to Me	22	1	
LiLI-Unlimited	10	12	2
Continuing Education	11	10	2
Competitive Grants	8	11	4
Tweens and Teens	7	13	3
e-Branch in a Box	2	4	11
Talking Book Service	10	8	2

Potential new statewide programs responding to the need of library to collect emerging formats include providing a statewide e-book program. Focus group participants all recommended the creation of such a program.